KING Jehoshaphat's *Charge to the* JUDGES *appointed by him in the Land of* Judah, Consider'd and Apply'd.

A

SERMON

Preached at *Worcester*,

August 10. 1731.

At the Opening of *a Court of General Sessions of the Peace, and of the Inferiour Court of Common Pleas*, for and within the County of *Worcester*. Being the first Court Held in the said Place and County.

By *JOHN PRENTICE*, M. A.

Pastor of the Church of CHRIST in *Lancaster*.

Ezra VII. 25, 26. *And thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God, that is in thy hand, set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not.*

And whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.

BOSTON: Printed by S. KNEELAND, and T. GREEN, for D. HENCHMAN, at the Corner Shop on the South-side of the Town-House. 1731.

Worceſter, ſſ.

AT *a Court of General Seſſions of the Peace Held at* Worceſter, *for and within the County of* Worceſter, *Auguſt* 10*th.* 1731.

Auguſt 11*th.* This Court Deſire the Honourable *John Chandler* and *Joſeph Wilder* Eſqrs; Give their Thanks to the Reverend Mr. *John Prentice* for his SERMON Preached Yeſterday at the opening the ſame, and of the Inferiour Court of Common Pleas, and Pray a Copy thereof for the Preſs.

Atteſt. *John Chandler*, jun. Cler. Pac.

BRITISH MUSEUM

King *Jehoshaphat*'s Charge TO THE Judges of *Judah*.

2 CHRON. XIX. 6, & 7. Verses.

And said to the Judges, Take heed what ye do: for ye judge not for Man, but for the LORD, *who is with you in the Judgment.*

Wherefore now, let the Fear of the LORD *be upon you, take heed and do it: for there is no Iniquity with the* LORD *our* GOD, *nor respect of Persons, nor taking of Gifts.*

THESE Words are Part of the History of *Jehoshaphat* King of *Judah*. In the Account given of him in this Book, there are too many things for me now to take a particular Notice of. Let it suffice to say,

That he was the Son and Successor of King *Asa*. He was five & thirty Years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty & five Years in *Jerusalem*. He was a good King; his Reign was pious and

and prosperous. We have the gracious Presence of God with him spoken of, his Piety acknowledged and applauded, together with his abundant Riches, Honour, and exceeding Greatness, mentioned in the 3, 4, 5, & 6. Verses of the 17. Chapter: And then at Verse 12. it is said, *And Jehoshaphat waxed great exceedingly.*

Indeed he was perswaded by *Ahab* King of *Israel*, whom he had joyned in Affinity with, to go with him against *Ramoth-Gilead*, which was a Fault in him; as may be seen in the 18. Chapter; and for this he is reproved & threatned by the Prophet in the beginning of the Chapter before us.

And as *Jehoshaphat* was *religious* himself, so his Endeavour was to make his People so; and to *revive* Religion among them. An Example worthy the Imitation of Kings, and civil Rulers in their Places.

He sent his Princes accompanied with Priests and Levites, to teach in all the Cities of *Judah*. Chapter 17. 7, 8, 9. Nay, He went in Person *throughout* his Kingdom, *and brought them back unto the Lord God of their Fathers*, Verse 4. of the Chapter before us. Such of them as had revolted from God to *Idols*, he recovered, and brought them back again unto the Lord.

Further, His *Justice* also is remarkable; his Concern for *this* among his Subjects, and his compassionate Regard to their Ease & Convenience is to be seen, in his constituting & setting up Judges in the Land, throughout all the Cities of *Judah*, City by City. As in Verse 5. *And he set Judges in the Land, throughout all the fenced Cities of Judah, City by City.* In every City, for it self and the Country adjacent, he empower'd & placed Judges, that Justice might be done with the most Ease and Conveniency to the People, and that they might not be forced to go so far as *Jerusalem* to obtain it. To this Purpose saith

a worthy Annotator upon the Place ‡ ; And no doubt but the King, who had the good of his Subjects ſo much atHeart, pitcht upon thoſe for Judges, who were *beſt qualified* to ſuſtain that Office.

A noble Pattern for thoſe to follow, who have Right & Authority to ſet Judges in the Land, and to conſtitute Officers in the State.

What is here ſaid of the King, is ſpoken in a Way of Applauſe & Commendation. And here by the Way we may obſerve,

That when God in his good Providence ſo increaſeth a People, as to render an Increaſe of Judges and civil Officers, needful for & advantageous to them ; it is a commendable thing in thoſe that have Right & Authority, to grant ſuch an Increaſe of them, for the Eaſe, Conveniency & Benefit of the People : and when it is done by ſuch, with an Eye to this, it lays the People under Obligations to Gratitude & Thankfulneſs to them.

This being ſaid, I come now to the Words of my Text, which contain in them a ſolemn *Charge* given by the King to the *Judges* that he had ſet up in his Kingdom.

He was concerned not only for the *Glory* of God, but alſo for the *Good* of his Subjects ; and a View to the Advancement of theſe, put him upon conſtituting and ſetting up Judges in ſo many Parts of his Kingdom. He was concerned alſo, that theſe might *fill up their Places*, and do what God & Men expected from them : and to influence them hereto, He chargeth them, as in the Text, *And ſaid to the Judges, Take heed what ye do*, &c.

But more particularly in the Words we may obſerve theſe Things.

1. The *Charge it ſelf*, given by King *Jehoſhaphat* to the Judges that he had ſet up, commiſſioned, or

‡ *Pool.*

conſtituted

constituted in the Land; in those Words, *Wherefore now let the Fear of the Lord be upon you. Take heed what ye do. Take heed and do it.* Which Expressions are very copious & comprehensive.

Wherefore now let the Fear of the Lord &c. The Fear of the Lord is needful to be found in the Judges of the Earth: without this Grace in them, & in Exercise, they are not like to attend what is incumbent on them. This therefore they are charged to labour after.

Take heed what ye do. Be very wary, careful and cautious; avoid every wrong Step. Guard strictly against, & carefully abstain from all Irregularities.

Take heed and do it. Be careful to do that which is lawful & right, or that which is incumbent on you in your Places. This is doubtless compriz'd in that Charge. But then

2. We may take notice also of *some Considerations mentioned to enforce this Charge*, or influence the Judges to keep it; in those Words; *For ye judge not for Man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the Judgment.* Consider that ye judge *for* the LORD, and not for Man *only*. It is God that hath advanced you, and set you up in his *All-governing* Providence for *Judges*, and he expects that you aim at his Glory *firstly*, and that you discover a due Regard to his Honour in your Places, & in the Judgment that you pass on Men & Things. You are set up for the *Good* of *Men* also, and that both singly & collectively considered, & therefore you must aim at and endeavour this likewise.

Who is with you in the Judgment; In the Matter of Judgment: In the Causes that come before you to judge & determine upon.

God is *with you*, to *inspect* & critically to observe you, in order to a calling you to an Account: To *direct* & *assist* you, when *sensible* of your *need* of his Guidance & Assistance, you humbly & earnestly

ask

ask the ſame, and when you *truly deſire* to do that which may be for his *Glory*, and the *good* of Men.

Once more, God is *with you*, *To protect* and defend you in the faithful Diſcharge of the Duties of your Office. But then,

3. & laſtly. In the Words we may obſerve, *The King's recommending the great God to them as a Pattern or Example to imitate & follow*; in thoſe Words, *For there is no Iniquity with the Lord our God, nor reſpect of Perſons, nor taking of Gifts.* I ſhall ſpend no Time in opening theſe Words; this will fall in under the Doctrine.

The Words of my Text are evidently inſtructive to the Judges of the Earth, that are ſet up from time to time.

I ſhall endeavour to comprehend the Subſtance of what is contained in my Text under the following Obſervation.

DOCT. *That it highly concerns thoſe that are ſet as Judges in the Land, to have the Fear of the Lord upon them, carefully to guard againſt and avoid all Irregularities, and to do that which is lawful and right, or to attend what is incumbent on them in their Places; inaſmuch as they judge not for Man, but for the Lord, who is with them in the Judgment; and to take him for their Pattern, with whom there is no Iniquity, reſpect of Perſons, nor taking of Gifts.*

This Truth I take to be a Word in Seaſon. You ſee I have choſen to deliver it much in the Terms of the Text; and you may eaſily diſcern that the Doctrine is very copious & comprehenſive, and that I might inſiſt much longer upon it than the Time will now allow.

I ſhall endeavour to ſay ſomething for the Illuſtration of it, under the following Heads or Propoſitions contained in it, as briefly as I can.

PROP. 1. That there are some among Men set as Judges in the Land.

PROP. 2. That it highly concerns such to have the Fear of the Lord upon them; carefully to guard against and avoid all Irregularities; and to do that which is lawful & right, or to do that which is incumbent on them in their Places.

PROP. 3. Such should endeavour this, inasmuch as they judge not for Man, but for the Lord, who is with them in the Judgment.

PROP. 4. & last. These should take God for their Pattern, with whom there is no Iniquity, respect of Persons, nor taking of Gifts.

I shall say something to each of these in their Order. And therefore

PROP. I. *There are some among Men who are set as Judges in the Land.* This is plain in the Verse before the Text, *And he set Judges in the Land* &c. i. e King *Jehoshaphat* set Judges in the Land, *throughout all the fenced Cities of Judah, City by City.*

Indeed, Civil Government is of God's sovereign *Constitution* & *Appointment.* Superiours & Inferiours among Men, are *Distinctions* of God's making: and these are to be found, both in the State, in the Church, in the Family, & in the School. Levellism was never designed by the Creator, Preserver and Governour of the World. Tho' it may have been scrupled by some, whether ever there would have been any Power & Government of Man over Man, had he continued in his Uprightness: yet since his Apostasy, that there should be a *Power* & *Rule*, is unquestionably the Will of the most High, *whose Kingdom ruleth over all.* The Foundation of civil Government appears in the *unerring* Oracles of God, to be laid in *divine Institution.* Hence we are assured in Rom. 13. 1, 2. ---- *For there is no Power but of God: the Powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever*

ſoever therefore reſiſteth the Power, reſiſteth the Ordinance of God. We are told alſo, Pſalm 75. 6, 7. *For Promotion cometh neither from the Eaſt, nor from the Weſt, nor from the South. But God is the Judge: he putteth down one, & ſetteth up another.* And we may read further to this Purpoſe in Prov. 8. 15, 16. *By me Kings reign, and Princes decree Juſtice. By me Princes rule, and Nobles, even all the Judges of the Earth.* Several other Paſſages there are to this Purpoſe in ſacred Writ.

Indeed, The *Forms* of civil Government in the World are *various*, & there are ſeveral *Degrees* and *Orders* of Men in the *State*, who bear differing *Titles* and *Names*, and each have ſomething aſſigned them, which is *proper* for them to do: they have their Bounds ſet which they may not paſs, and Order requires that they do their own Buſineſs, and that they don't go beyond their own Line.

It muſt be acknowledged, that theſe Orders of Men in the State, are not ſet in their Places *immediately* by God, but *mediately*, and by the Inſtrumentality of Men. *Superiour Officers* conſtitute thoſe that are *Inferiour*: they impower & commiſſion them to move & act in this or that Poſt. Thus King *Jehoſhaphat* is ſaid *to ſet Judges in the Land*, Ver. 5. of our Context.

Judges are ſome of the Officers in the State, of *God's ordaining* and appointing. Deut. 16. 18. *Judges and Officers ſhalt thou make thee in all thy Gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and they ſhall judge all the People.*

Judges are judiciary Under-Officers in the State, whoſe Buſineſs it is to hear & determine Cauſes referr'd to them, to apply & execute the Laws, & to diſtribute Juſtice between Man & Man.

Now, to theſe that bear the Name of Judges, the Terms of Superiour & Inferiour do belong. Yea, according to our Conſtitution, even *Jurors* may be

said to be Judges. And that these are set up, appointed & constituted from time to time, as they are needed, is clear from Scripture & humane Observation. I might add here, This is evident from our *own Observation*. God of his abundant Goodness hath multiplied his People in our Land, & increased them in this Part of the Country, so that it hath been thought needful & convenient, to have an Increase of our Counties, and accordingly the General Assembly of the Province have in their great Wisdom & Goodness, with an Eye to the Ease and Convenience of the People, opened a new One in this Part of the Land, Courts of Justice have been appointed to be held in this Place, Judges and Officers have been made & set up, as we see this Day. And I may add, That it concerns the *Judges*, yea *all Officers* in the County, to endeavour throughly to understand their Duty in their respective Places, and to apply themselves to the faithful Discharge hereof. But this I shall endeavour to shew under the next Proposition, which I now pass unto.

PROP. II. *That it highly concerns such, to have the Fear of the Lord upon them; carefully to guard against and avoid all Irregularities, and to do that which is lawful and right, or to attend that which is incumbent on them in their Places.* This is contained in the Doctrine, and I think evidently in the Text. *Take heed what ye do: Wherefore now let the Fear of the Lord be upon y u, take heed and do it.*

Here are three Things to be spoken to.

1. It highly concerns such, *to have the Fear of the Lord upon them.* They should be *such* as *fear* God. This is one Thing remarkable in the Advice given by *Jethro* to *Moses*. Exod. 18. 21, 22. *Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the People, able Men, such as fear God, Men of Truth* &c. *And let them judge the People at all Seasons.* Judges should be Men of

pure

pure and undefiled Religion, Men of *undiſguiſed* Piety. They ſhould have the *Fear* of God *implanted* & *ruling* in them; without this, they cannot be ſafe and happy *as* Men, neither will they be likely to behave themſelves, becoming their *exalted* Station, nor attend what is incumbent on them in it.

Indeed, A Man may be a Judge without *this*. And tho' *this alone* will not qualifie a Man for that Office: yet a Judge without it, is not likely to *magnify his Office*, nor to act in it according to the juſt Expectation of GOD and Men.

The unjuſt Judge gloried in his Shame, when he ſaid, Luke 18. 4. *Tho' I fear not God, nor regard Man.* Judges ſhould *ſtand in awe* of the great God, who is the *ſupream* Judge, *the Judge of all the Earth.* They ſhould have his *Fear* in their *Hearts*, *governing* and *influencing* their *Lives.* They ſhould be able to ſay truly, with *Joſeph*, who was a Ruler in the Land of *Egypt*, *I fear God*, Gen. 42. 18.

It muſt be allowed, That this is not the *only needful* Qualification. Judges ſhould be Men of a *quick* and *ready Perception*, and of a *ſound Judgment.* They ſhould be *able*, *skilful*, *underſtanding* Men, Perſons of *Knowledge* both in *Men* & *Things*, in *Laws* both *divine* & *humane*, In thoſe *eſpecially* of the Government which they are to act agreeable to, and in the *Cuſtoms* & *Uſages* of Mankind, particularly where they dwell.

Such ſhould be *wiſe*, *vigilant*, Men of *Gravity*, *Sobriety*, *Meekneſs*, *Patience*, *Juſtice*, Men of *Truth*, of *Courage*, *Magnanimity* and *Reſolution*, *Merciful*, *eaſy of Acceſs*, *diligent* in *Buſineſs*, and Men of *Diſpatch.*

Theſe things might be inſiſted on, but the Time will not allow it.

Now altho', it be a thing to be deſired that theſe Qualifications ſhould be found in Judges: Yet, that which I have been ſpeaking of, is what they ſhould not content themſelves without. If this be in them & in Exerciſe,

Exercise, they will be likely to avoid the ill Examples that are set before them. Neh. 5. 15. --- *But so did not I because of the Fear of God.* They will be likely to proceed with *Caution*, and to act *faithfully* in their Office: Their Obligation to which remains yet to be shewn. Therefore,

2. It highly concerns such *carefully to guard against and avoid all Irregularities.* ---*Take heed what ye do.* Words denoting *Caution* & *Circumspection* in their Conduct. It concerns such to comply with that in Psalm 4 4. *Stand in awe & sin not.* It concerns them, consider'd as Men, as Christians, to *Abstain from all Appearance of Evil*, 1 *Thess.* 5. 22. And to comply with that in Eph. 5. 15. *See then that ye walk circumspectly.* They are also oblig'd to this consider'd *as* Judges. They should use great Caution & Circumspection, & carefully avoid all Violations of the divine Law, and of the Laws of the Government, all undue Executions of them, all wrong Judgments & unjust Sentences. The Glory of God, their own Good, and the Good of others oblige them to this.

3. It also concerns such *carefully to do that which is lawful and right, or to attend that which is incumbent on them in their Places.* --- *Take heed and do it.* As there are things to be avoided and fled from by them, so there are many things which they must be careful to do, considered as Christians, & as Judges. It is the last of these, my Text leads me to consider. And here I shall not pretend to mention all that is incumbent on such to do. Let it suffice to say, as followeth.

They must endeavour clearly and fully to understand the Causes that come before them, and which they are to determine or judge upon. Therefore they must hear the Parties concerned, and critically examine & search into

into the Caſes that are brought before them; that they may find out the Truth of the Matter. They muſt avoid all *raſh* Judgment, and not determine any Caſe before it is *heard* & *well underſtood*. There are ſome Caſes ſo dark and intricate, that it is no eaſy thing to underſtand them. They require a great deal of Pains, Search & Enquiry, to have them appear in their true Light; and unleſs they are well underſtood, there is danger of a wrong Judgment. Judges therefore had need take Pains to come to the Knowledge of the Truth, and a good Underſtanding of the Cauſes they are to judge and determine upon. We are told, *that it is the Glory of God to conceal a Thing, but the Honour of Kings is to ſearch out a Matter*, Prov. 25. 2. This is true of Judges as well as Kings. We find *Job* when ſpeaking of himſelf as a Judge, declaring, Job 29. 16. *And the Cauſe which I knew not, I ſearched out.* This is what is needful for Judges to do; it is what they ought to do. Deut. 19. 18. *And the Judges ſhall make diligent Inquiſition.* And that in Order to their giving a right Judgment.

Again, It is incumbent on them, *To determine the Cauſes that come before them juſtly.* Judges ſhould be *Men of Truth*, Exod. 18. 21. They ſhould be Men of Veracity themſelves: they ſhould be Lovers of Truth, and ſuch as hate Falſehood & Diſſimulation, and they ſhould love to know the Truth, or the true State of the Caſes, they are concerned in, and that they give Judgment upon; and therefore are to endeavour (as you have heard) to underſtand the Truth of Matters lying before them, and when they have made Diſcoveries hereof, they are to paſs a right & juſt Judgment or Sentence. Deut. 16. 18. *Judges and Officers ſhalt thou make in all thy Gates, which the Lord giveth thee throughout all thy Tribes; and they ſhall judge the People with juſt Judgment.* And then we find at Ver. 20. *That which is altogether*

ther just, shalt thou follow. *Job* tells us what he did as a Judge, and herein he is a *Pattern* for Judges, in all succeeding Ages and Generations, Job 29.14. *I put on Righteousness, and it cloathed me; my Judgment was as a Robe and a Diadem.* It is a divine Command that respects Judges, Lev. 19. 15. *Ye shall do no Unrighteousness in Judgment, but in Righteous- shalt thou judge thy Neighbour.* It is a Charge given to Judges, Deut. 1. 16. ---- *Hear the Causes between your Brethren, and judge righteously between every Man and his Brother, and the Stranger that is with him.* Such must not condemn the Innocent, nor clear the Guilty. No; This is an Abomination to the Lord. So we are told, Prov. 17. 15. *He that justifieth the Wicked, and he that condemneth the Just, even they both are Abomination to the Lord.*

Again, It concerns such to administer *Justice impartially.* *Partiality* must be carefully shunn'd. ---- But this will fall in under the last Proposition, and therefore I shall say nothing further to it here, but speak to it in its proper Place.

Furthermore; *It belongs to such to have a special Regard to the Poor, Needy and Helpless, the Fatherless and the Widow; to right them, when wronged and oppressed.* These have under God none to repair to, to right and help them, but such as are in Authority. Now such should take *special* Care of these, and appear for them, and see that they have Justice done them. Isai. 1. 17. *Relieve the Oppressed, judge the Fatherless, plead for the Widow.* See the divine Will in this Matter further, in Psalm 82. 3, 4. *Defend the Poor and Fatherless: Do justice to the Afflicted and Needy. Deliver the Poor and Needy: rid them out of the hand of the Wicked.* We find it as a sad Complaint made against some, Isai. 1. 23. ----- *They judge not the Fatherless, neither doth the Cause*

Cauſe of the Widow come unto them. It is ſaid in a Way of Commendation of the Reign of *Solomon*, in Pſalm 72. 12, 13, 14. *For he ſhall deliver the Needy when he crieth: the Poor alſo and him that hath no Helper. He ſhall ſpare the Poor and Needy, and ſhall ſave the Souls of the Needy. He ſhall redeem their Soul from Deceit and Violence: and precious ſhall their Blood be in his Sight.* Once more, *Job* as a Judge appeared for, and took ſpecial Care of ſuch, and herein he is to be followed by thoſe that have Power in their Hands. Job 29. 12, 13, &c. ---- *I delivered the Poor that cried, and the Fatherleſs, and him that had no Helper. The Bleſſing of him that was ready to periſh, came upon me. And I cauſed the Widows Heart to ſing for Joy. I was Eyes to the Blind, and Feet to the Lame: I was a Father to the Poor; and the Cauſe which I knew not, I ſearched out: and I break the Jaws of the Wicked, and pluckt the Spoil out of his Teeth.*

Once more, *Such ought diligently to apply themſelves to their Buſineſs, and to expedite their Affairs that lie before them. He that ruleth, with Diligence,* Rom. 12. 8. They are God's *Miniſters* attending *continually* on this very thing, and therefore it is reaſonable they ſhould be rewarded for their Service. Rom. 13. 6. *For this Cauſe pay you Tribute, for they are God's Miniſters, attending continually upon this very thing.* They ſhould diligently attend the Work and Buſineſs aſſigned them. It is worthy our Obſervation, what we find in Exod. 18. 13. *And it came to paſs on the morrow, that Moſes ſat to judge the People, and the People ſtood by Moſes, from the Morning unto the Evening.* All unneceſſary *Delays* of Judgment are to be avoided. Theſe are Injurious and hurtful to thoſe that have Caſes lying before the Judges. It therefore concerns ſuch to *expedite* Affairs, and to bring Matters to as *ſpeedy*

an Issue as may be. Acts 25. 15. *Therefore when they were come together, without any Delay on the morrow I sat on the Judgment-Seat, and commanded the Man to be brought forth.*

These are some of the Things which it concerns Judges to do. I shall now proceed to say something to the third Proposition.

PROP. III. *Such should endeavour this; Inasmuch as they judge not for Man, but for the Lord; who is with them in the Judgment.* These Considerations the King in his Charge lays before the Judges, to enforce it, or to influence them to keep it. *For ye judge not for Man, but for the Lord, who is with you in the Judgment.* These are indeed very powerful Motives and weighty Considerations. I shall take some brief Notice of them.

1. *They judge not for Man, but for the Lord.* Not for Man only, but for God also. Not for Man *primarily*, but for the Lord: and for Man *secondarily*.

Sure it is, that they judge *from* God. Their Power to judge is originally from him; it is derived from him through the Instrumentality of Men. It is not *immediately* from him, as hath been already hinted, but *mediately*, in various Ways according to the differing Constitution of Kingdoms and States. It is he that sets them up. God (*whose is the Kingdom and the Power*) is the *Fountain* from whence *their* Power comes, in whatever *Channels* it is conveyed to them. It is He that impowers them to act as such. And it is he that *limits* and sets Bounds to their Power and Authority; they are to judge not according to their own Wills, but by stated Rules, even those of God's Word, and humane Laws agreeable hereunto. God hath not subjected the Lives, Names, Liberties, & Properties, or

Estates

Eſtates of Men to the Wills of ſuch, arbitrarily to invade or diſturb their free Enjoyment of them.

And as they judge *from* God, ſo they judge *for* him; they ſhould do ſo. They *ought* to improve their Power and Authority for God's Glory. This is what all Men are obliged to aim at, in whatſoever they do, 1 *Cor.* 10. 31. This is what Judges ſhould aim at in all their Adminiſtrations. It is what all Officers, all concerned in Courts of Juſtice, ſhould aim at and deſign in all they do. Now it is for the Glory of God, when theſe move & act uprightly in their Places. It follows then, that it highly concerns ſuch to have the Fear of the Lord upon them, to take heed what they do, or carefully avoid all Irregularities, and do that which is lawful and right, or attend that which is incumbent on them in their Places; becauſe they judge for the Lord.

Again, *They judge not only for the Lord, but for Man alſo.* Tho' not for Man *primarily*, yet for him *ſecondarily*. This is intimated in the Text. They are ſet up in the World, not only for God's Glory, but alſo for Man's Good: and they ſhou'd act in their Office for the *Good* and Benefit of Men; and this not only ſingly but collectively conſidered. Rom. 13. 4. *For he is the Miniſter of God to thee for Good.* The Good of particular Perſons, and of Communities, which are made up of theſe, is the great *End* of their Office, and what they ſhould aim at whilſt acting in it. They are to be the *Guardians* of Men's Perſons, Reputations, Liberties, Lives, and Properties.

In Subordination to the *Honour* and *Glory* of God, which is the *ſupream* End of all Government, and what all in civil Authority in their ſeveral Places

should *aim* at and endeavour; the *Good* of Men is what is to be lookt at and endeavour'd by all such.

Judges are to judge for the *Good* of Men, that those under them *may lead quiet and peaceable Lives in all Godliness and Honesty.* It was never designed by God or Men, that some should be advanced to the Judgment-Seat, to make any afraid but the *Evil-Doer*, to discountenance *good Works*, or the truly religious, vertuous and orderly. No; Such are to be countenanced, protected, praised and encouraged by them. *Rom.* 13. 3, 4.

The Design of the Promotion of Men in the World is that they might be *Benefactors to it*, Luke 22. 25. Now since it is thus, surely it is of great Importance that Judges have the Fear of the Lord upon them, &c. But then,

2. *God is with them in the Judgment.* --- *Who is with you in the Judgment.* This is another Consideration mentioned by the King to the Judges, to put them upon fearing God, guarding against every thing offensive to him, and upon endeavouring to do that which is pleasing in his Sight.

God is an *Immense* Being; he is *essentially* present every where. *He fills Heaven and Earth*, Jer. 23. 24. His *Omnipresence* is celebrated in *Psalm* 139. 7. and so on. God is *gloriously* present in Heaven. He is *graciously* present with Men on the Earth. He is thus present with his Worshippers, and those that fear him. He is thus present with earthly Judges, conscientiously endeavouring a Compliance with their Duty, to *protect* and defend them from the Rage of wicked Men, which the faithful Discharge of the Duties of their Office, or the Administration of Justice frequently exposes them to.

Again,

Again, God is *with them*, *to guide*, *direct and assist* them in all the *arduous* Affairs that lie before them; when, sensible of their Need of divine Guidance and Assistance, they humbly, sincerely and earnestly *seek* to him herefor. These Considerations are Matter of Encouragement to such, & considering the Words in this Light, they tend to quicken them to endeavour faithfully to attend what is incumbent on them in their Places.

But further, and that which seems to be principally intended in the Phrase, is this, That God is present with them in all their Courts, and in the Execution of their Office, to *inspect* and *observe* them, to take *exact Notice* of *what* they do, of their *Manner* of doing it, and of their *Aims* and *Ends* herein; with a Design to call them to an *Account*. This is an awful Thought, and what hath a proper Tendency to excite such to their Duty. Judges are not only eyed by Men: but they are also under the all-seeing Eye of the great God. He stands by and looks on, & hears: Psal. 82. 1. *God standeth in the Congregation of the Mighty*. He critically observes their Conduct in their Office, with a Design to call them to an Account. They that judge others must be judged themselves; and this by *the Judge of all the Earth*, who will certainly do right.

Surely then, it highly concerns Judges to have the Fear of the Lord upon them, & take heed what they do.

PROP. IV. & last. *These should take God for their Pattern, with whom there is no Iniquity, Respect of Persons, nor taking of Gifts.* Jehoshaphat here recommends the blessed God as a Pattern to them, and enforceth the Charge given to his Judges by the Consideration of divine Justice and Impartiality: *for there is no Iniquity with the Lord our God, nor Respect*

Reſpect of Perſons, nor taking of Gifts. They muſt 'be followers of God: they muſt be God-like in 'their perſonal Endowments, and publick Manage-'ments'. Conformity to God, as it is their Duty, ſo it will be their Glory. Without this they will not maintain the Dignity of their Poſt, nor anſwer the End of their Advancement. God is the Judge, the Judge of all the Earth, and he is righteous in all his Ways. *There is no Iniquity with the Lord our God.* Nothing that is amiſs, is done by him. *There is no Unrighteouſneſs in him,* Pſalm 92. 15. He is the *juſt Lord,* Zeph. 3. 5. *He is the Rock, his Work is perfect, for all his Ways are Judgment, a God of Truth, and without Iniquity, juſt and right is he,* Deut. 32. 4. God and his Works are *perfect*: therefore worthy the Imitation of humane Judges.

Again, There is no *Reſpect of Perſons* with God. He *regardeth not Perſons,* Deut. 10. 17. He *accepteth not the Perſons of Princes, nor regardeth the Rich more than the Poor; for they are all the Work of his Hands,* Job 34. 19. He don't reſpect them ſo as to do any unjuſt Thing, to gain their Favour or to avoid their Anger. He is free from all Temptations to Injuſtice, which frequently proceed from Reſpect of Perſons. Now herein he is *Exemplary* to earthly Judges, and ſhould be followed by them. They ſhould diſtribute Juſtice *impartially,* without Reſpect of Perſons. Deut. 1. 16, 17. *Hear the Cauſes of your Brethren, and judge righteouſly between every Man and his Brother, and the Stranger that is with him. Ye ſhall not reſpect Perſons in Judgment, but you ſhall hear the ſmall as well as the great, you ſhall not be afraid of the Face of Man, for the Judgment is God's.* Favour or Prejudice muſt not biaſs Judges: they muſt like *Levi,* know neither Father nor Mother, Brother nor Siſter, in the Cauſe of Juſtice.

Juſtice. Partiality in Judges is very criminal, and what is to be avoided. Lev. 19. 15. *Ye ſhall do no Unrighteouſneſs in Judgment: thou ſhalt not reſpect the Perſon of the Poor, nor honour the Perſon of the Mighty, but in Righteouſneſs ſhalt thou judge thy Neighbour.*

Once more, *There is no taking of Gifts with God.* So it follows in the Text, *Nor taking of Gifts.* As God regardeth not Perſons, ſo he *taketh not Reward*, Deut. 10. 17. Herein he is to be imitated by earthly Judges. They muſt not receive Gifts, i. e. take Bribes, to pervert Juſtice. They ſhould be Men *hating Covetouſneſs*, Exod. 18. 21. If a Judge be a covetous Man, and have an inſatiable Deſire after Riches, he will be in Danger of being led aſide, of taking Gifts from them that will give, and of perverting Juſtice. It is a ſad Thing when Juſtice is bought and ſold. Judges ſhould hate and abhor Bribery, and avoid it. Deut. 16. 19, 20. *Thou ſhalt not wreſt Judgment: thou ſhalt not reſpect Perſons, neither take a Gift; for a Gift doth blind the Eyes of the Wiſe, and pervert the Words of the Righteous; That which is altogether juſt, ſhalt thou follow.* It is dangerous for the Publick, when ſuch take Gifts or Bribes. Prov. 29. 4. *The King by Judgment ſtabliſheth the Land: but he that receiveth Gifts, overthroweth it.* Yea, it is dangerous for the Receivers of them, Job 15. 34. *For the Congregation of Hypocrites ſhall be deſolate, and Fire ſhall conſume the Tabernacles of Bribery.* Notwithſtanding this, There are ſome that love Gifts, and that take Bribes, and the Effect is ſad and lamentable. See Amos 5. 12. *For I know your manifold Tranſgreſſions, and your mighty Sins: they afflict the Juſt, they take a Bribe, and turn aſide the Poor in the Gate from their Right.* It was a Complaint enter'd againſt ſome Rulers of old, forecited Iſai. 1. 23. *Every one loveth Gifts,*

and

and followeth after Rewards. *Samuel* declares his Innocence here, and it was acknowledged by the People, 1 Sam. 12. 3, 4. *Behold here I am, Witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed: Whose Ox have I taken? Or whose Ass have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? Or of whose Hand have I received any Bribe to blind mine Eyes therewith? And I will restore it you. And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any Man's Hand.* But tho' *Samuel* was *clear* here, yet *his Sons* were not so, but *faulty* in this Respect. They were Judges as we may see, 1 *Sam.* 8. 1. And yet took Bribes and perverted Judgment, Verse 3. *And his Sons walked not in his Ways, but turned aside after Lucre, and took Bribes, and perverted Judgment.* This is what Judges may not do; they should be strictly just. See Exod. 23. 3. *Neither shalt thou countenance a poor Man in his Cause.* It follows in the 6, 7, 8, 9, Verses, *Thou shalt not wrest the Judgment of thy Poor in his Cause: Keep thee far from a false Matter; and the Innocent and Righteous slay thou not. For I will not justifie the Wicked. And thou shalt take no Gift: for the Gift blindeth the Wise, and perverteth the Words of the Righteous. Also thou shalt not oppress a Stranger.* ----- This is all I shall offer for the Confirmation of the Proposition, and of the Doctrine.

What hath been said would admit of a large Improvement.

Many useful Inferences might be drawn from the Doctrine that you have now heard imperfectly handled, but I must omit the mention of any. Should I give my self a Liberty here, I might trespass upon your Patience, and hinder the Business of the Day.

All

All therefore that I ſhall offer further, ſhall be ſomething by Way of Exhortation, as followeth.

In the firſt Place, To the *Honourable Judges* ſet up in this *County*, who are to attend Courts of Juſtice in this Place. I have been deſired to ſay ſomething at the opening of this Court: & having entertained you with ſomething (I hope) agreeable to the Oracles of God, I would now call upon you ſeriouſly to regard it. I cannot addreſs you more pertinently than in the Words of King *Jehoſhaphat* to the Judges in my Text.

The *Oath* of God is upon you. The *Eyes* of Men are upon you, and you may be ſure will be ſo. And *more than this*; The Eyes of God your Judge, to whom you muſt give an Account, are alſo upon you: *By him Actions are weighed, & he counts all your Steps.* His *Glory* is greatly concerned in your *Caution* and *Fidelity.* The Honour of Religion is not a little concerned herein. The Honour of the Government, the Honour of the County, your own Honour and Peace, the Good of Men, the Good of the People in the County eſpecially, are all concerned herein. *Wherefore now let the Fear of the Lord be upon you. Take heed what ye do. Take heed and do it.* If you are cautious and careful to ſhun, and do, thoſe things which God and Men juſtly expect you ſhould; If you *begin* well and patiently *continue* in welldoing; this will be honourable to God, *by* and *from* whom you judge. This will be honourable to Religion, honourable to the Government, honourable to the County, and advantageous to it. Yea, this will advance your own Eſteem amongſt Men, and render you more and more venerable in their Sight. *Good Men* will *prize* and honour you: and *Evil-Doers* will be *afraid*

and stand in awe of you. This will tend to your *inward Peace*, whilst you *live*, and when you come to *die*, and to your *joyful Account*, when you shall be called to give it up to God your *Judge*. And to add no more here: If you serve your Generation according to the Will of God, when you are fallen asleep and are laid to your Fathers, you will be remembred and *honourably mentioned* by Survivers. Let these Considerations then prevail with you carefully to comply with the preceptive Will of God, considered as Christians, and as in your Office, and with the Laws of the Government which you are to conform to. *Be wise now, O ye Judges of the Earth. Serve the Lord with Fear, and rejoyce with Trembling*, Psalm 2. 10, 11.

Altho' my Text and Doctrine leads me particularly to apply my self to Judges, yet it may not be improper for me, in the next Place, considering the Occasion, To call upon *all others* that have Concern in this Court, and I would say to you also, *Take heed what ye do, let the Fear of the Lord be upon you, take heed and do it.* Avoid all Irregularities in your Places, and endeavour carefully to attend what is respectively incumbent on you.

I shall nextly, on this Occasion apply my self in a few Words, to *my Brethren* in the *Ministry* here present. You well know the Obligations we are under *to declare the whole Counsel of God*, to be as extensively useful and serviceable as we can, keeping with our own Line; to promote the *Glory* of God, and the *Good* of the *Souls* of Men, especially of those committed to our *Charge*, and over whom the Holy Ghost hath made us Overseers. It concerns us greatly to *take heed to the Ministry we have received in the Lord, that we fulfil it*, Col. 4. 17. To promote Religion, vital Piety, Vertue

and

and good Order in our Towns, to promote Truth, Peace and Righteouſneſs, to teſtify againſt Sin, and to ſuppreſs it, as far as in us lies. Let us then *prudently* and *faithfully* endeavour theſe Things. And if we do, we may hope for ſome *good Fruit* of our Endeavours: & if we are ſucceſsful in them, among other Advantages, this will be one, that it will be an *Eaſe* to our *Judges* and *Officers*; they will not have ſo much to do or bear.

Again, Let us be *exemplary* for our *Reſpect* and *Regard* to *the Powers ordained of God.* Let us be much in *Prayer* to God for them. Yea, let us attend our Duty towards our People, mentioned in Titus 3. 1. *Put them in Mind that they be ſubject to Principalities, and Powers, to obey Magiſtrates*, &c. Thus ſhall we ſtrengthen their Hands for this good Work they are engaging in.

I may now, I think, without Impropriety apply my ſelf *to the People in this Place*, and ſay to them alſo, *Take heed what ye do*, and ſee to it, *that the Fear of the Lord be upon you.* It is known that the Courts of the County are to be held in this Town. It is obſerved by ſome, that Courts held in Country Towns, are an Occaſion of a great deal of Sin and Diſorder in ſuch Places, though deſigned for the Eaſe and Convenience of thoſe that have Buſineſs at them, and for the Suppreſſion of Sin and Diſorder.

Many Perſons in Places where Courts are held, and in other Places alſo, that really have no Buſineſs at them, will notwithſtanding leave their Buſineſs, and ſpend their Time unprofitably, and more Money than they or their Families can well ſpare. Some repair to ſuch Places to ſatisfy their Curioſity, ſome to gratify their Luſts, they run

into a great deal of Extravagance in Speech; a great deal of Exceſs and Intemperance is obſervable among ſome on ſuch Occaſions.; Many don't return Home ſeaſonably: and in a Word there are many Diſorders and Indecencies to be ſeen at ſuch Times. Let theſe things then and all ſuch as are not of *good Report*, be carefully guarded againſt and avoided by you. Let *Parents* and Heads of Families, and thoſe that are conſiderably advanced in Years, endeavour to ſet a good Example, and to keep up their Authority, and reſtrain their Children and Servants from all Indecencies and Irregularities: and let young Ones flee youthful Luſts, avoid youthful Follies: yea endeavour *all* of you, to behave your ſelves with a Chriſtian Decency. This will be honourable to God, honourable to the Town, and honourable to you that fall in with this Counſel. But if this Word prove *unacceptable* and be *diſregarded*, you will not be able to ſay, that you have not been warned, cautioned, and I truſt well adviſed.

Once more, Could I ſpeak to all capable of conſidering and obſerving in all the Towns in the County, I ſhould think it proper to addreſs them with thoſe Words in the Text, *Take heed what ye do, and let the Fear of the Lord be upon you.* Carefully avoid all Irregularities, and do that which is reſpectively incumbent on you. Labour to be truly religious, and make Religion *your Buſineſs*, endeadour to comply with the Commandment of God in its Breadth, and to continue ſo doing, and carefully to obſerve the good and wholeſome Laws of the Province. If the People were ſo wiſe as to do this, it would redound to the Honour of God, and to the Honour of the County; then might they expect the *Protection*, *Patronage* and *Praiſe* of

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the Powers ordained of God, and ſet over us by him: thereby they would ſerve their own Intereſts, and that both temporal, ſpiritual and Eternal.

But if they grow irreligious, contentious, diſorderly, looſe, vain, and unjuſt; this will be reproachful, this will be injurious and hurtful to them in all their valuable Intereſts. What can they then expect, but the Frowns and Judgments of God upon them? Yea this will increaſe the Work of the Judges and Officers among them to their *own Diſadvantage*, according to that in Rom. 13. 3,4. with which I conclude. *For Rulers are not a Terror to good Works, but to the Evil: Wilt thou not then be afraid of the Power? Do that which is good, and thou ſhalt have Praiſe of the ſame. For he is the Miniſter of God to thee for Good. But if thou do that which is Evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the Sword in vain: for he is the Miniſter of God, a Revenger to execute Wrath upon him that doeth Evil.*

FINIS.

A vacant Page happning here, it may gratify and edify the Reader to insert the following Lines (agreeable to the present Subject) out of the Reverend Dr. *WATTS's Psalms of* David *imitated.*

PSALM CI.

The Magistrate's Psalm.

I.

MERCY and Judgment are my Song;
And since they both to Thee belong,
My Gracious God, my righteous King,
To Thee my Songs and Vows I bring.

II.

If I am rais'd to bear the Sword,
I'll take my Counsels from thy Word;
Thy Justice and thy heavenly Grace
Shall be the Pattern of my Ways.

III.

Let Wisdom all my Actions guide,
And let my God with me reside;
No wicked thing shall dwell with me,
Which may provoke thy Jealousy.

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IV.

No Sons of Slander, Rage and Strife
Shall be Companions of my Life;
The haughty Look, the Heart of Pride
Within my Doors shall ne'er abide.

V.

[I'll search the Land, and raise the Just
To Posts of Honour, Wealth and Trust:
The Men that Work thy holy Will
Shall be my Friends and Favourites still.]

VI.

In vain shall Sinners hope to rise
By flatt'ring or malicious Lies:
And while the Innocent I guard,
The bold Offender shan't be spar'd.

VII.

The impious Crew (that factious Band)
Shall hide their Heads, or quit the Land;
And all that break the Publick Rest,
Where I have Power shall be suppress.